The Benson Orbit

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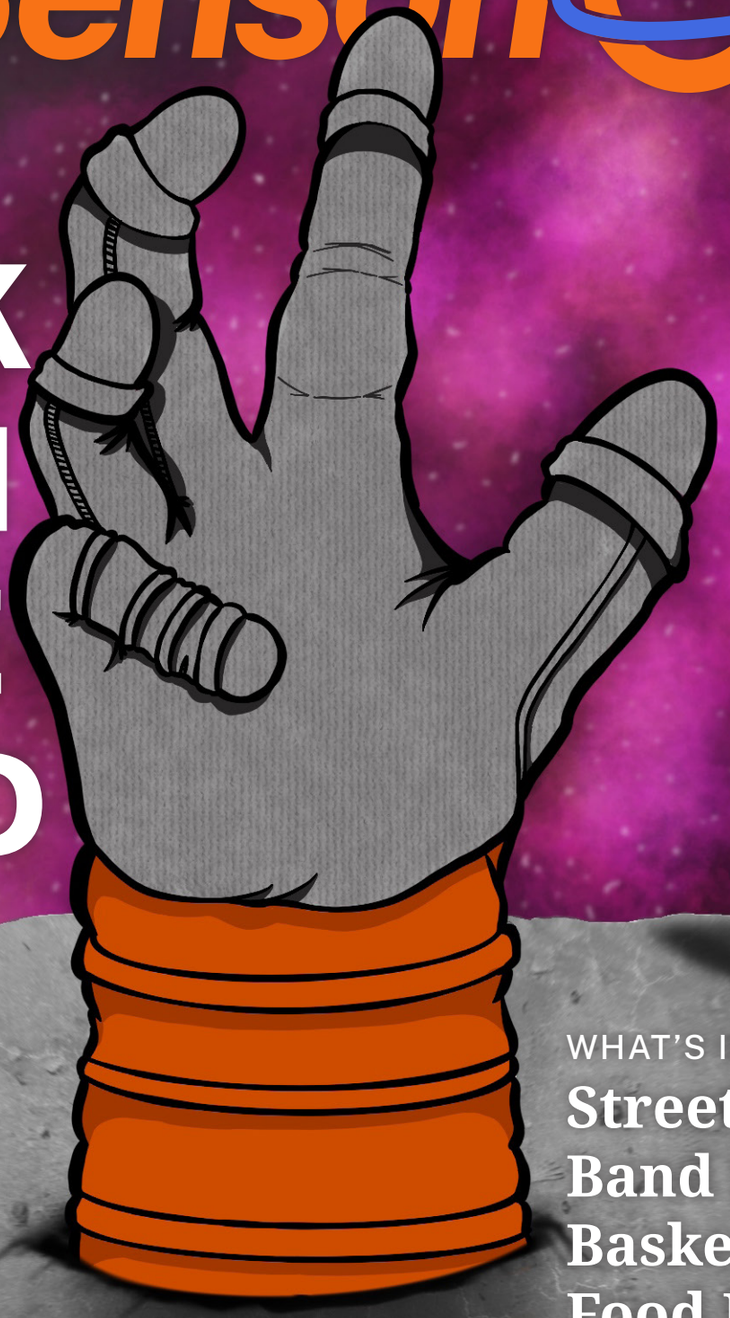
BACK FROM THE DEAD



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AND MORE!

Ashtyn Duff

“We expect *Tech Pep*’s future to be as bright and pioneering as its past,” the final issue of Benson Polytechnic High School’s newspaper read. That future is finally arriving. It’s just sixteen years late.

Student journalism is the heartbeat of a school. It celebrates our accomplishments, challenges our assumptions, and records our history for the people that come after us. It gives students the power to ask hard questions in a democracy that depends on informed voices. For ninety years, *Tech Pep* did just that — covering championship wins, publishing fierce student opinions, and documenting what it was like to be here at Benson. But in 2010, amidst district budget cuts, *Tech Pep* shut down, leaving a newspaper-sized-hole in our community.

For a decade and a half, Benson went without student journalism. Our story, of course, never stopped. Buildings were renovated, a new mascot took the field, and generations of students walked through these halls. Thousands built, forged, and created as Tech Shows came and went. But without a shared page to bring it all together, many of those stories went untold.

A school that is united by spirit and bonded by name deserves more than just fading memory. We deserve a record that listens closely, looks deeper, and keeps our history alive. In 2024, we brought journalism back to Benson by launching *The Benson Orbit* online, reviving a tradition that had been silent for too long. Now, the *Orbit* widens.

This first print issue is a nod to our past and a commitment to our future. It’s something you can hold in your hands, stuff in your backpack, and pin to your wall. It’s proof that we were here, that we built this, and that we have something to say.

We’re back from the dead.

— Nick, Zahra, and Zayd, Editors

TEACHER FEATURE

Ms. King: World Traveler, Trivia Champ, and 'Real Housewives' Connoisseur

By **Elizabeth Larrison**

Torin King with a skeleton in one of her classrooms, where she teaches Beginning Art.

If you were to walk into Torin King's classroom right now, you would likely see her walking around in a colorful outfit, helping students with their still-life drawings. Her walls are plastered with posters of Van Gogh, Monet, Kusama, and other artists. Instrumental pop music is playing from her computer.

King has been teaching for 11 years, nearly half of which she has spent at Benson. She teaches Art, AP Art History, Leadership, and is the advisor of the Student Body Government. Outside of Benson, King loves to travel and often travels as a chaperone through EF Educational Tours, a student travel program. She has visited twenty different countries around the world, and this summer she took Benson students to Switzerland, Spain, France, and Italy, and visited Australia. "I got to go to rainforests, and the Great Barrier Reef, to two different major cities, and learn a lot of history."

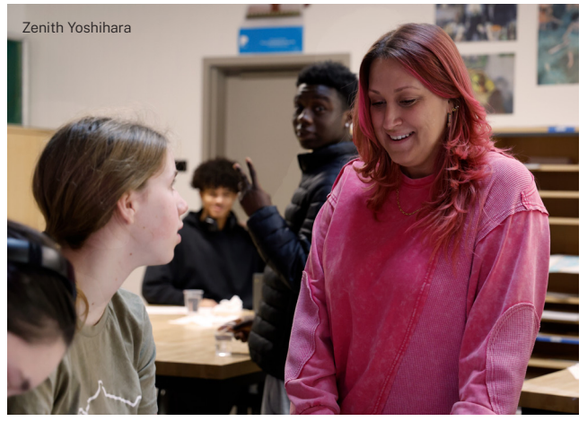
When not racking up frequent flyer miles, King is also a trivia champion, where her favorite topic is pop culture. "If it's on a reality TV show, I've seen it. I am a connoisseur." Lately, she's been enjoying Survivor and The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City. King also is a painter and an avid reader. She loves fantasy and biography, and so far this year she has read thirty books.

Before she was teaching it, King got her first taste of student leadership as a secretary for her Student Body Government when she was attending a dual enrollment program at St Petersburg College in Florida.

Now that Benson has settled into the routine of a new school year and homecoming approaches, King's Leadership class has been busy. "This group this year is really awesome at coming up with ideas," she said, explaining that her job is mostly to iron out the fine details and communicate with administration. "People think I have a lot more say than I do," King continued. "I try to be as democratic as possible, [...] but in reality a lot of stuff goes up above me and the administrators are a large part of the discussion."

King shared why she loves teaching leadership – and all her other classes – so much, "I do this job, which is really really hard, because I loved school and I had amazing teachers, and school was a place where I really felt seen, heard, valued, and appreciated."

"We want students to have a similar experience of this being their place. We want you here, we want you to be part of this community. And that drives me a lot."



The art of King's teaching is built on relationships with students.

STREET INTERVIEWS

Vicky Moore interviewing a Henry Higgins employee.

What Do Locals Have To Say About Benson Students?

By **Finn Cash**, **Vicky Moore**, and **Ethan Kane**

The Benson Orbit hit the streets in a Channel 5-esque interviewing montage to answer one question: How do the people around Benson Polytechnic feel about us as a student body moving back into our home school?

When people were asked if they had noticed Benson coming back, most answered with a yes, along with the thought that the students have not done a lot to affect them. Some loved seeing the students enjoy the same neighborhood they lived in. Others enjoyed the Benson soccer field. The coach of an experienced (old) team said, "We are still up in age but we feel young." We haven't changed their love for the game.

Past the field, on 15th Street, we also talked to one particularly enlightened man, Luck Gone Blessed. After telling us about his journey from selling drugs to reforming to Christianity and giving back to this community, we asked if he had noticed that we'd moved back into our building. He told us, "Have I noticed? I've noticed my whole life."

But, people went deeper. They shared some advice for us. Someone who especially stood out was an up-and-coming film producer. His name was Chris, and we talked to him for quite a while. After telling us about his next film called Partners: How Starbucks Baristas Started a Labor Revolution, airing at Film Row Cinema on November 3rd, we asked him for advice. With the wise words from only someone who has lived a fulfilling life, he said, "Just start meditating."

Finally, maybe the most important interview with a street sweeping pooch. When asked the same questions as everyone else, their answer was a resounding "...." (dogs don't talk).

Latinx Club Educates Students on Their Rights around ICE During Complex Times, and Gives a Space to Share Culture

By **Aspen Trask**

Benson's Latinx Club is creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students to embrace and learn about Latinx culture. "Being in Latinx Club helps me be around my culture. We get to learn more about our culture and heritage," says Amir Velazquez Castillo, a junior at Benson and the vice president of Latinx Club. The club welcomes everyone, no matter their race. Students in Latinx Club will take part in activities, such as leading spirit weeks and decorating sugar skulls for Día De Los Muertos. "We hope to make traditions within the club that can go on every single year, and that every club member can make a fun memory with those traditions," Castillo says.

The club's main goal is to educate and support the students at Benson Polytechnic High School.

(Top) Students participate in Ojitos Mentirosos Day during Hispanic & Latinx Spirit Week by doing clown-style face painting. The spirit week let the club spread Latin joy and culture from September 29th to October 3rd.

(Right) Members of the Latinx Club together on Benson's southern balcony.

Latinx Student Club helps to spread awareness on political issues that may affect Latinx Students and their families, such as the current worries about ICE. The club has spread awareness by constructing a bulletin board in the front hallway of Benson, sharing cards with information about people's rights, and putting up posters around the school with said rights printed on both sides. "[The bulletin board helps to] make it be known that even if people are scared, there's still the red cards down there so that they can provide them for their families and let them know what they can do," says the club's president, Camila Salzar Guerrero, a senior at Benson.

Latinx Student Club meets every Tuesday at lunch in Laura Arias's room (Room 212). Every student is welcome, regardless of their race, gender, or age. Come eat your lunch, partake in fun activities, and learn more about the Latinx culture at Benson. Guerrero says, "I also like being around people with the same culture or different cultures, and be able to learn more, like about their culture, not just my culture. They don't have to be Latino students to be in the club. Anyone is welcome to join."

Native American Culture Club Holds Assembly to Mark Heritage Month

By **Zayd Faruqui**

November is Native American Heritage Month. On November 13th, the Native American Culture Club at Benson put on an assembly with Native American dancers. Qalch'ema Friedlander, one of the organizers for the assembly, as well as the president and founder of the club, said, "I think the assembly went really well. I was very honored and very excited when I finally was told that we were, like, a 100% go for it from the administration here." She was impressed by student turnout, saying, "I've had some pretty good turnouts in the past, but I've never been able to, like, fully fill up the bleachers on one side."

There were some challenges with organizing the assembly, though, as the entire event needed to be planned and scheduled before sending it out to the principal. Friedlander said, "I had always wanted a school wide assembly for Native American Heritage Month." The club met up a few times throughout the summer to discuss how to run the assembly and what it would be based on. There were, however, challenges with finding the dancers. Friedlander said, "We had to have a certain amount of dancers, and we were very much unable to find those dancers really quickly because even though we put out that information there, we weren't able to get dancers until that last week."

In addition, the Native American Culture Club prepared slide presentations to be shown during second and sixth periods. "We now have 62 slides of information on different Native American subjects," Friedlander said. The club also organized a spirit week in the last week before the Thanksgiving break, including a traditional apparel day on Tuesday, and a Native American Arts workshop during flex on Friday. Friedlander said, "We're making earrings [...] we had weaving kits that you could make a little cloth out of, and we also had a stretchy bracelet station so you can make stretchy bracelets for [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women] day, which is in May."

Sophomore St'xalq Friedlander dances at the NACC assembly on November 13th.

Friedlander also enjoys helping students learn about their tribes. "Being able to help others learn that stuff, those necessities, and also teaching students who have no idea about Native American culture whatsoever, teaching them the dances, the languages, the history, and the amazing arts has always been my favorite thing to do."

HOSA Students Host Blood Drives in Fall and Winter

By **Zayd Faruqui**

Liz Gonzalez-Burns and Claire Goff, both sophomores in the Health Occ academy, get papers ready for people participating in the fall blood drive.

"You're just sitting in a chair for like an hour and you're changing someone's life, which it's just kind of crazy to think about," said Ambreal Xiong, the HOSA president. HOSA, the Health Occupations Students of America, hosted a blood drive on November 10th, and again on February 11th. When sign-ups open, you can sign up by going to room 221 (Irynne Padua's Room), or by talking to a HOSA member. It's best to sign up early. Ambreal Xiong, the HOSA student leader, stated that too many people showing up without signing up, or signing up late, can stress out the phlebotomist, and people may have to be turned away. There are also requirements to be able to donate — you must be sixteen or older, and 125 pounds or more. Xiong said that the weight requirement is only because of a risk of passing out if you're under the weight limit.

Irynne Padua, the HOSA advisor, added that students aren't the ones who draw the blood. "We partner with Bloodworks Northwest. They're the ones that actually do the blood draws and collect blood." When asked about reasons to donate blood, Xiong replied, "Well, you're one, saving a life, which I think is really important, but you're also helping people get cancer treatments and cancer research and, I mean, you're just changing lives once you donate your blood."

After Years of Silence, Band Returns to Benson

By **Zayd Faruqui**

Dan Foster instructs Benson's band after school.

After a long hiatus, band has returned to Benson! Heide Goertzen, who teaches history and psychology, and has taken on the role of one of the advisors of the club, highlighted how important band is for the community. "I think band is important at Benson because it brings, it helps bring school spirit and it helps bring this element to Benson that is missing, which is like this creative outlet that a lot of our students miss, and that has been a big part of our students' lives." Band meets during B flex, and on Wednesdays from 3:45pm–5:00pm.

When asked about her reasons for starting band, Goertzen mentioned that Benson has a legacy of having a band, and she worked with the former director, Dan Foster, to get it started at Benson. Another person that helped is Gene Burton, a retired band director at the Gresham-Barlow School District and the current leader of Warner Pacific University Band.

In spite of all the support and talent, starting up was not without difficulty. One issue was with getting the instruments to students. Benson hasn't had instruments for years, and the band does not have any access to instruments from PPS because they're not a class. However, that's where the club's advisors stepped up. Gene Burton shared some instruments from Warner Pacific University. Jacob Patterson, who teaches radio at Benson, also provided some instruments.

Goertzten says that, due to the lack of instruments, she was originally thinking of starting a chorus instead — but later realized that many students at Benson played in middle school, and that bringing back band would be a great opportunity for Benson students. When asked about band becoming a class in the future, Goertzen stated, "We're in the midst of huge budget cuts. They're saying that budget cuts next year will be worse than they were this year. So it's just hard for a lot of schools to give FTE for, you know, creative classes like music and art and dance and things like that." In summary, it is unlikely for band to have a class in the near future, due to a lack of budget.

Noah Johnson-Green, a junior who was a key advocate for the return of Benson's band program, plays the orchestra bells at practice.

Benson junior Noah Johnson-Green expressed, "I know that there are a lot of people who want to come to Benson but can't justify [it] because of the lack of really any music programs. And so I think having this band and maybe hopefully some more curricular music programs that will lead to will just encourage growth of the school in general and just create a more positive and better atmosphere at the school."

One Year In, the New Benson Is Still a Work in Progress

Classes faced delays and equipment issues at opening, and many other issues have continued to go unaddressed.

By **Zayne Dahlquist**

On August 27th, 2024, the brand new Benson campus officially opened for the 2024-2025 school year. Benson finally had A/C, proper seismic retrofitting, new equipment, a cafeteria space that wasn't underground, and brand new classrooms that were built for each major. The new school was going to be perfect.

But after nearly half a billion dollars, and seven years of planning and construction, Benson still wasn't finished. Students were in the building, but many of the CTE classes were unable to conduct regular teaching, as the brand new equipment they depended on wasn't installed, approved, or operational. In court documents from an ongoing lawsuit between PPS and Andersen Construction, PPS noted that Benson wasn't even "substantially complete" until May 2025.

The modernized Benson under construction in 2022.

One class affected by the remodel was Construction. A major improvement with the new shop space is the new dust collection system. Luke Hotchkiss, a teacher in the shop, said "they made sure that it was gonna pull enough air and the contaminants in the air out of the system and that it wasn't gonna burn down and kill children in a fire, which I would agree are the two most important things when designing it."

> "They're going to cut part of their body off on the saw because of the negligence of what's been constructed."

Unfortunately, the dust collector is something of a double-edged sword, as saws won't get electricity if it isn't running, which also causes them to unexpectedly turn on. If a saw is on when the dust collection stops, it will start up again the next time it turns on. This is especially dangerous because the 80 decibels of noise from the dust collector can mask the sound of running machinery. Hotchkiss voiced significant concern over this, "Somebody's gonna walk over to one of [the saws] at some point, assuming that the saw's off, but it's gonna be running, and they're going to cut part of their body off on the saw because of the negligence of what's been constructed."

One specific machine is especially impacted by these dust collection problems. In the back of the shop there is a CNC machine that, by Hotchkiss' estimate, costs at least $100,000. Each time the dust collection shuts off while it operates, there is a risk of the machine being damaged, which would be an incredibly expensive mistake — much more expensive than simply switching the panel that the machine is connected to.

He also criticized some of the management decisions made with the building. "Talking to some of the workers, and even some of the lower-level middle managers, the sense is that they genuinely believe in their hearts that the project was haunted by ghosts, which I believe is an excuse made for lack of proper management."

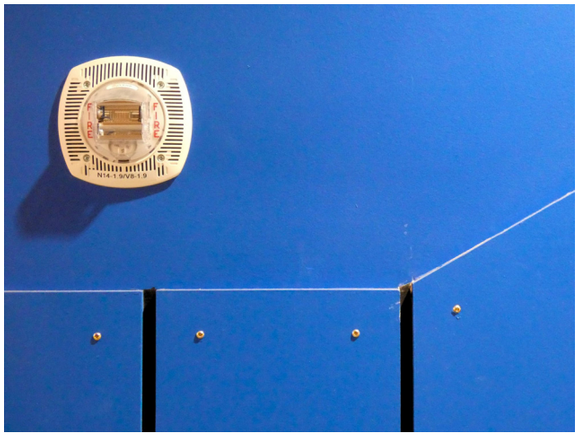
Jacob Patterson, the KBPS instructor, also gave his perspective on the new building. "Speaking as a teacher and as a student that went here, the new Benson is magical. It's like a college campus." He specifically highlighted the Commons area as a major boon to the school's sense of community. Patterson also called it a major improvement over the "dungeon-like cafeteria" that existed in the basement prior to the remodel. But despite his praise of the remodel, it was not without its consequences.

For several months at the start of the 24-25 school year, the Radio class had to operate out of an unused science classroom, while every other major was at least able to enter their spaces. Having to run a class focused around audio production without any recording studios had a major impact on the students' experiences and education, and Patterson specifically said that the delays and lack of studios was "heartbreaking" for the Class of 2025. Being a radio station, KBPS poses a unique challenge to contractors, as it requires broadcast engineers to vet the final steps of construction. However, these crucial engineers can only work a few hours a week due to budgetary constraints. Even now, parts of the KBPS building, such as the video recording studios, are still unfinished.

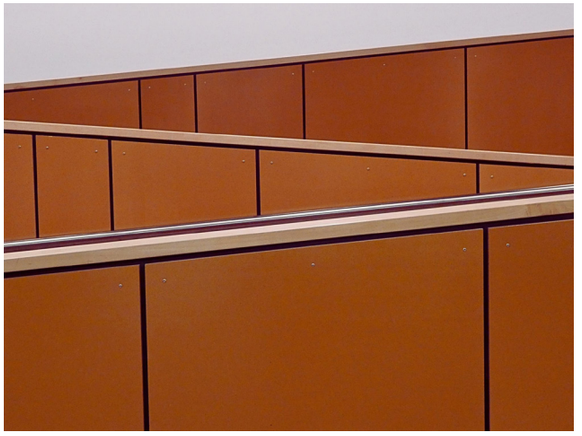
Yet another teacher who has been impacted by the new building is Kristen Mico, who teaches video production and serves as an adviser for the Orbit. While the large classrooms and new equipment in the Digital Media space is more than welcome, one of the most important rooms was rendered unusable. "We had plans for a video production studio which has a beautiful white seamless wall for really creating different environments with light. It's really necessary for interviews, recording dialogue, and making a lot of movie magic happen, but unfortunately it's one of the loudest rooms in the building, so I can't even really use it for what it was built to do." The noise comes from the ventilation ducts in the ceiling, which have no auditory isolation from the room itself.

As a consequence of the problems and delays that came with the new construction, PPS and Andersen Construction, the company that did the remodel, have filed lawsuits against each other. This may delay fixing the building's issues. Ricky Booker, an Electric teacher with over 15 years of experience in the construction industry, commented that "Construction always ends up in a legal case."

The fleur de lis carvings on the top of these columns are gorgeous, and really reflect the grandeur of this school's history. I also adore the rich wood colour. Gorgeous.



I loved the contrast between the white fire alarm and the Benson-blue wall. I also thought the way the soft edges of the alarm juxtaposed the sharp angles of the paneling was beautiful.



This ramp really caught my eye. I love the triangular shapes the ramp forms, and the two contrasting wood tones are just perfect.

A Love Letter to Our Building

By **Elizabeth Larrison**

I'm an artist. I try to notice the small details in life. Now halfway through our second year at the new campus, I have amassed a small collection of details I adore. Our school has so many cool elements, and I think it's important to appreciate the beauty of this building we all spend so much time in.

Benson has unisex bathrooms. While bathrooms don't tend to scream "beauty," I loved the way that the bathrooms are completely devoid of color. Our school is full of blues, oranges, and woodtones and the bathrooms are black plastic and white tile. I also loved the repetition of the identical stall doors.

The Lone Pear. As I was wandering the school on the hunt for small details of our school, this pear caught my eye. Abandoned by its owner as they rushed to class after grabbing breakfast, the pear's organic shape and uneven color beautifully juxtaposes the sleek look of our newly renovated campus.

Oh my goodness. This might be my favorite photo I took. The monotone white, only broken up by the texture of the sign and alarm popping out of the wall. It's a subtle detail that really caught my eye.

Connection on the Court

Team dynamics of Benson's girls' basketball helps them stay connected on the court, and off.

By **Isla Faria**

Zenith Yoshihara

Key Phillips shoots a freethrow

Squeaks of shoes hitting the lines, and coach Precious Alex's loud voice filled the gym. "Keep going," "push harder," "You can run faster," every word falling on intently listening ears, taking direction straight to heart, 16 back and forths for the six turnovers from the last game, pushing through it with their all. Their attitudes never lacking, putting in 100% effort 100% of the time, moving and working together as one, all of the time. No matter how simple the drill, the court never quiets, with constant voices, high fives, and a type of energy that can't be put into words. This team knows how to lock in while having a good time working hard, and the heart of it all is their head coach.

Alex pushes her players while creating a positive family-like atmosphere filled with laughs. "Our coach says we are a sisterhood," said Vivienne McDonald. This is Alex's second year as the head coach, but she had been an assistant coach the year before that, when her daughter was on the team. Alex is constantly communicating with the team and builds them mentally and physically. Her passionate coaching has built a cohesive team filled with drive and unity.

Their unity comes from repetition and practicing just about year-round, which helps them maintain their connection. "Being together in summer workouts, lifting, and being together a lot, helps us understand each other and play better," McDonald continued. They practice around eight months a year, which has made them very tight-knit, and by training throughout the year, they maintain their chemistry while building it. "We stay locked in the whole season on and off the court, and continue building team chemistry," said Samarah Massey. They're not just a team, they're a family, and they care about each other on and off the court. "We love to support each other," said Jalya Lackey. Benson's girls' basketball team has strong chemistry because of their dedication to building a stronger team dynamic. Massey continued, "The team dynamic is everybody staying positive and uplifting." They work year-round to grow, both physically and mentally, and together in every aspect of the game.

> "We are going to make it to the Chiles Center"

Their chemistry is shown on the court, and just by watching them, it is seen how well they work together. These girls have worked to build connections and support, and they hope to make it to the state this year. "We are going to make it to the Chiles Center," Lackey said. The last time Benson went to Chiles Center was in 2024. Benson is hungry for this title, and their effort shows that. Lackey said "We want to learn and get better. Last year, we weren't as locked in, but this year we really want it."

At a game against Ida B. Wells, the varsity girl's basketball team huddles up.

Zenith Yoshihara

The Heat Is On

Benson boys basketball use last year's early exit to build fearsome bonds.

By **Tobinn Carlson** & **Indigo Voas White**

Winter sports season is in full swing, and the Boys Basketball team is hyped for their up and coming games, feeling more than ready to take on the challenges ahead. Last year's losses — not making it far in the league's championship tournament — are on their mind. Richad Hudson, co-captain of the team, reflected, "You know, the first round exit is the worst. So when we lost, I think [it] let me just take what we could have done better in the beginning of the year."

AJ Dimke

Niku Malu

But the team is trying to fix their mistakes with better attitudes, more leadership skills, and striving to feel more connected. "[I am] just trying to be more positive towards my teammates and lift them up, because we have a lot of young people and I want to be a good mentor for them," Hudson continued.

The season hasn't been all sunshine and rainbows, as last year they had no seniors on the team and felt like they were too new. But this year, the team is much more connected. "[I] feel like one of our strengths is that we're honestly able to keep energy the entire time and play through kind of whatever's happening," said Dache Acelar, the other co-captain of the team. "If we're able to consistently do that and play through all the adversity all the time, then there's nothing that can really stop us. I'm not going to lie."

This year, they plan to go big and make it past the first round of the state tournament. Acelar says, "We got kicked out in the first round, which we weren't expecting to do. We were, even though we were the underdogs in the first round and we were expected to lose. We got our a**es kicked, I'm not gonna lie. We just got absolutely killed. So we're not expecting to let that happen again this year. We want to play that same team and show [...] that we [are] better now [...] We weren't who we played like last year."

As New as Our Building, The Benson Swim Program Only Picks up Speed in their Second Season

By **Kynzee Ferguson** & **Ethan Kane**

Each practice, the Benson Swim team takes over Matt Dishmen pool and makes it their home away from home.

Marley Best Brown has "been swimming competitively since 4th grade and [sees] no end in sight." Swimming is a part of her life, both in the pool and out. In regard to her close friends and family, "they really push me to become my best. They're supportive. And they really help me, giving me opportunities to be my best." Best Brown says her biggest challenge is the amount of hours in a day, and says she is so dedicated to the sport that sleep comes farther down on the priority line. In spite of the challenge, it's worth it. Her favorite parts are "the health benefits and the people I've met along the way."

Opportunities for athletes like Best Brown weren't always available to BPHS students. Steve Espe, who is a therapeutic intervention coach, as well as the & coach of the swim team, said, "The swim team has been a part of Benson for the last four years, but before that it hasn't been in motion for fifteen years."

Espe's swimming roots are deep at BPHS. "I used to go to Benson and I swam for Benson, and so I was kind of excited [When I got placed here as a teacher.]" He tried to get the swim team back. It took seven years to get it back up and running. The process included a building move during our remodel. Just like the football program, the swim team was also started back up when we returned to NE Portland.

Espe's job is to coordinate all the practices and address any issues the students may have within the sport. He's essentially the overseer of the swim team's accomplishments and goals for the future of the 36 swimming on the team this year. He has helped to kick off the season into a fine swimming team with some new recruits and old ones remaining.

One of these veteran Astros is Hesh Coughlin, who has had a long career as a swimmer. They stated, "I've been swimming my whole entire life, my mom took me when I was a baby. Funny story, I didn't like getting my hair wet as a kid." As an Astro, Coughlin approaches the sport from a joyful, relaxed place.

Even though Coughlin and Best Brown are on the same team, they couldn't have more different styles as student athletes. Coughlin just loves to be a part of the team. Best Brown is deeply driven. They both have a sense of accomplishment, growth, family, and hard work and with Coach Espe and others at pool side. They both do their best by winning swim competitions and beating their personal best in the Benson spirit. They both keep their heads up, stay strong, and cheer for each other as they swim each lap. They've all found a home on the team that Mr. Espe helped to restart.

Food Reviews: What Are the Best Options Off-Campus?

By **Zayne Dahlquist**

MidCity Smash Burger

In addition to smash burgers and french fries, they also offer chicken nuggets and chicken sandwiches. Their prices are very reasonable, a little bit cheaper than franchised fast food chains.

Deluxie Boi Smash Burger: One of the best burgers I've had. The toppings work incredibly well with the flavor and texture of the rest of the burger, even adding a slight bit of crunch. The sauce was tangy and very slightly spicy, though a little bit sparse.
Crinkle-Cut Fries: Seasoning was good, but somewhat uneven; some fries were kind of bland compared to others. They weren't quite as crispy as I would like, but they were still very good.
Chicken Nuggets: Really good; they were crispy and well-seasoned.

MidCity Smash Burger is located just on the other side of the football field, so it isn't a terribly long walk, about a quarter mile there and back. The food was served fairly quickly, but not quick enough that we could finish our meals at the cart. I recommend that you start heading back once you get your food, and try to eat it on-campus to avoid being late to class.

Nacho's House

Nacho's House offers a wide variety of Mexican food, including burritos, tacos, quesadillas, taquitos, and, as their name suggests, nachos. Their prices are very low for the quality and amount of food.

Nachitos: The tortilla chips stayed crunchy and came with a perfect amount of toppings, all of which were super high quality and tasted wonderful. Great for sharing with a friend.
Carne Asada Burrito: The steak strips were delicious and very well seasoned. The other fillings (rice, black beans, pico de gallo, cheese) were all very good. The burrito also came with green salsa, which made for an excellent addition. Finishing it in time for class was a bit difficult due to its large size, but I'm not complaining.

Nacho's House is located in the same lot as MidCity Smash Burger, and served us our food in a similarly short amount of time.

Henry Higgins Boiled Bagels

Henry Higgins offers a wide range of sandwiches, from a typical breakfast sandwich with eggs, meat and cheese, traditional Lox bagels with onions, capers, and cream cheese, to a Reuben bagel, and even a PB&J. All these different sandwiches can be on your choice of bagel, at a wide range of prices. Just a bagel with cream cheese will run you about $6, and most sandwiches range from $9 to $13. While I had entered the store hoping to pick up a lox bagel, I ended up pivoting to something else when I noticed that it would cost me $20.

BLT on Jalapeño bagel: I chose the Jalapeño bagel entirely on impulse, but it ended up working really nicely for this sandwich. In addition to the lettuce, bacon, and tomato, there was also a little bit of mayonnaise that helped to balance some of the spice from the jalapeño. The bagel itself was somewhat tough, but that texture combined well with the crispiness of the bacon and the softness of the other fillings.
Plain cream cheese bagel: My friend just opted to get a simple cream cheese bagel, but he described it as one of the best bagels he has ever had.

Henry Higgins is located a little under a quarter-mile away from Benson. Despite not looking very busy, the wait time was longer than we expected. Even though we went out as early as we could during flex, we still ended up being slightly late to 6th period. Given that flex is a little bit longer than lunch, it might not be the best idea to go to Henry Higgins during lunch.

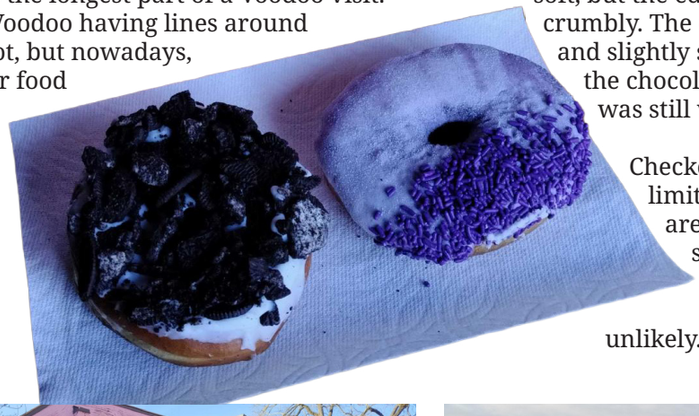
Voodoo Donuts

Voodoo is known across the country for selling strange and unique donuts, though some of their prices can be a little bit steep compared to their competition. They also don't offer much else other than donuts, so maybe don't go if you're looking for a place to get a substantial lunch.

Dirt Donut: The donut itself has a very soft and doughy texture. The bit of crunch from the cookie pieces is a welcome addition. The cream from the Oreo's sweet filling cuts through both the taste of the donut, and the chocolate from the other parts of the Oreo chunks

Grape Ape Donut: Putting Kool-Aid powder on a donut sounds like a strange idea at first, but it works surprisingly well. I haven't had many donuts with a fruit flavor, so the Grape Ape is incredibly unique in that regard. The powder is also very slightly sour, which leads to a more complex flavor in a donut that would otherwise just be sweet.

Voodoo is also just across the field, but is slightly closer than the food trucks. Generally, choosing a donut is the longest part of a Voodoo visit. I remember Voodoo having lines around the parking lot, but nowadays, you'll get your food very quickly.



Franz Bakery Outlet

Franz mainly offers a variety of sweets and baked goods at very affordable prices. People mostly get sweets and energy drinks from Franz, but I have seen some students walking around school with entire loaves of bread.

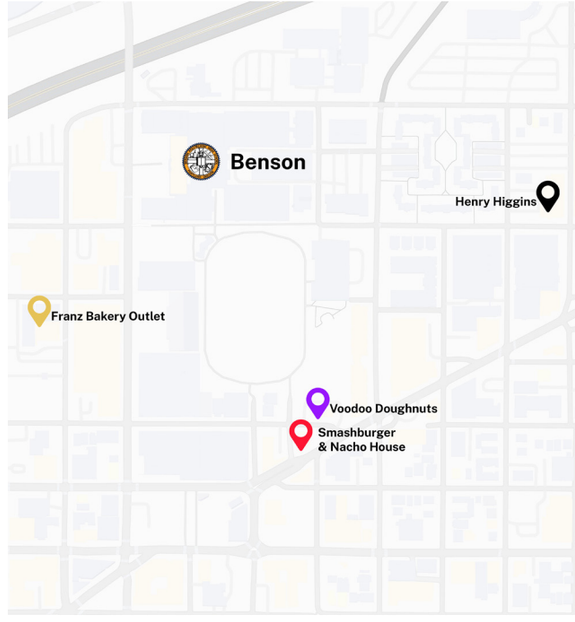
Franz is especially notable for having very cheap prices, offering hand pies for $1, as well as packages of nine cookies or boxes of six donuts for only $3 each.

Also, not a fantastic place to go for a substantial lunch.

Old-Fashioned Chocolate Donuts: The chocolate coating was crispy, rich, and slightly flaky. The ratio of donut to chocolate was just right, and kept the chocolate flavor from being overwhelming.

Chocolate Chip Cookies: As their packaging says, these are soft-baked cookies. They were very soft, but the edges were still a little bit crumbly. The dough had a very strong and slightly salty flavor compared to the chocolate chips, but the cookie was still very sweet overall.

Checkout is very fast, but the limit on how many students are allowed in the store can slow things down during lunch or flex. Being late to class is possible, but very unlikely.



Ask the Astro

Our school mascot gives advice to students.

"Hi Astro! I worry that I have taken on too much but there isn't anything I am willing to drop... how do I make sure I can handle it all?"

Hello and thank you for the question! It can definitely be hard when you take on too much work, I know from personal experience, as I have had this exact problem one too many times.

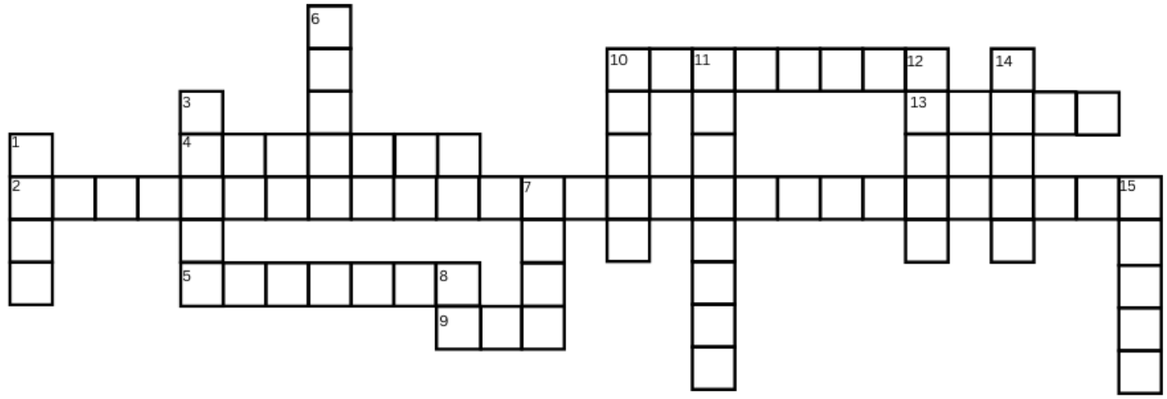
The first thing I would recommend is if you don't want to drop anything, you can try to be less involved in some of the things. Now, I'm not saying you should just go and take a backseat in everything you do, but it might help to not be the person who spends the most time and effort on each of your activities. For example, instead of being the president of a club, you could just be a member. If you volunteer, do four hours instead of eight. If you're learning how to cook, learn one new recipe this week instead of three. Obviously, there are some situations where this isn't possible, but honestly people are usually pretty understanding if you have other commitments. You don't have to do the most all the time.

The second thing I want to mention is that if you are doing a bunch of things, especially those you work at at home, learning time management can be really helpful. Think about what has time constraints, what's the most important to do (ex. What assignments are worth the most for your grade, what needs to get done vs what's just for fun), and how much time everything will take and plan accordingly. Try to split your time up into the different things you need to do based on this. Do important things or things due soon first, although try not to forget about other things happening. Allot different amounts of time to different activities based on how much time they will take, etc. If this sounds overwhelming, you don't have to do all this, just start small with something like a to-do list! And of course, remember to take breaks.

Lastly, if things just aren't working out, or if it's too stressful, you might have to drop something. I know this can be really disappointing, but it's not worth it to burn out. I know it sometimes feels like you have to do everything, especially with the pressure that's in high school, but you still have years and years of time left to do things.

Benson Crossword

By **Gerald Hively**

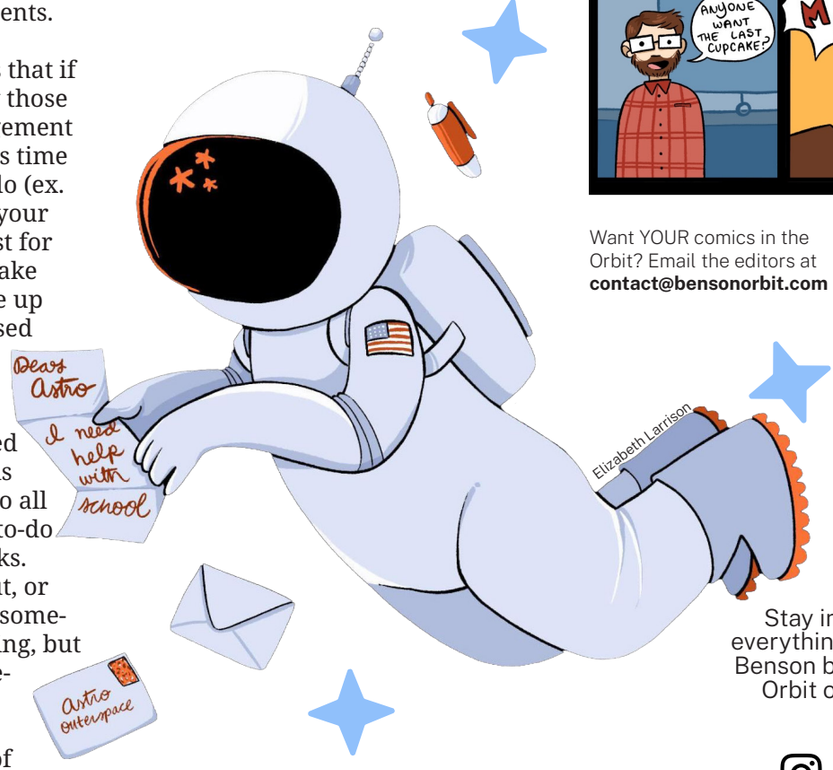


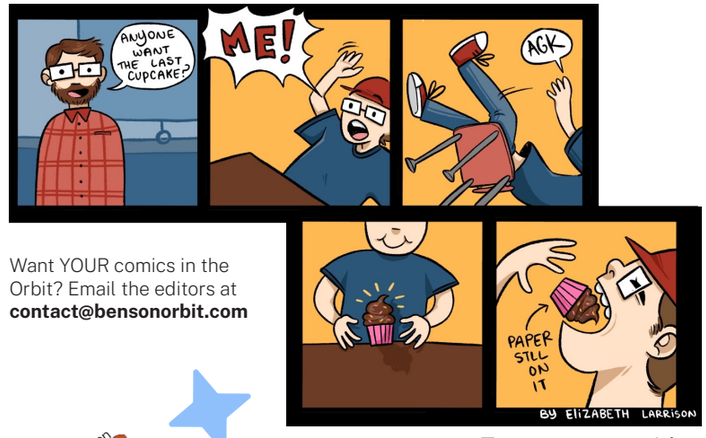
Across

2. The full name of our school
4. Where to get books.
5. The 'D' in 'DMP'
9. P.E. sit ups work out these muscles
10. 9th graders
13. PAT is this for teachers

Down

1. Benson's radio station
3. Nearby mall
6. Our mascot
7. Worked on in Auto
8. Sing la la __ in singing club
10. Source of bread related smells
11. Teacher
12. A possible career for Health Occ students
14. Wire a ____ bulb in Electric
15. 11:45 to 12:18





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